

**DISCUSSION REGARDING SYMPOSIUM PAPERS
ON RECENT RESEARCH IN THE FORGOTTEN PENINSULA:
BAJA CALIFORNIA ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

ERIC W. RITTER
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT/SHASTA COLLEGE

A valuable seminar on the archaeology and ethnohistory of Baja California was presented at the Society for California Archaeology's annual 2008 meeting in Burbank, California. The Director of Baja California's National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH), Julia Bendímez Patterson, chaired this symposium. The author, an invited discussant, has offered herein a succinct discussion on the symposium papers, other related papers, and relevant topics paramount in peninsular archaeological research as the first decade of the twenty-first century comes to a close.

It is indeed gratifying to see a continuation of international dialogue and cooperation in dealing with Baja California's cultural heritage and a view of the Californias without borders. The session's organizers and presenters are to be complimented on their skill and professionalism. Julie Bendímez acted as a most gracious chair, a person to whom Baja California archaeology owes so much for her personal studies, political savvy, and encouragement of research by Mexican and foreign scholars.

While the symposium papers with a few exceptions concentrated on the northern portion of the peninsula, they still covered many of the research themes or topics current in Baja California. Furthermore, there were a handful of other papers at the meeting dealing directly or indirectly with Baja California archaeology that are relevant to this discussion.

Not presented were papers on such topics or issues as rock art (which has for years been one of the most discussed and studied aspects of the peninsula's prehistory), historic archaeology (contact and post-contact), mission studies, ethnoarchaeology, linguistic prehistory, and gender, among others. One point of departure that can be engaged in this brief discussion is Don Laylander's (2006) dialogue regarding issues in Baja California prehistory (antiquity, simplicity or complexity, continuity or change, isolation or connections, mobility or sedentism, coast or interior, and environmental or cultural determinism). When looking at these issues we can see where the various papers fit or don't fit as the case may be, and it is also reasonable to discuss some of the prospects for further Baja California archaeological research.

THE PAPERS

The denizen of peninsular history and ethnohistory, Michael Mathes (2008), has offered a perspective on peninsular Indian warfare and conflict based on ethnohistoric and archaeological evidence. His statement that the inhabitants lived "continually under a cloud of violent death" may not be accepted by all, but there seems little doubt that violence among contact-era peoples at least has been under-considered. We need to study or excavate more burials and more sites and look carefully at the pictorial record of these past inhabitants. The warfare perspective for Alta California Indians was also presented in another paper at these meetings by Mark Allen (2008), and a good example is apparent in recent archaeological work in northern California by Hildebrandt and Darcangelo (2008) in their excavations of a Wintu cemetery.

What is less certain is how pervasive this conflict was throughout the epochs as the peninsula was initially sparsely colonized and as populations grew and became "packed" and conflicts, stresses, competition, and apparent intensification of resource use became more apparent. Scalar stress has been proposed as one of the possible reasons behind central peninsula rock art florescence (Ritter 2002:186) and possible images of conflict.

Oswaldo Cuadra (in this volume) initiated the session discussing the complexities of dealing with heritage resources along California's east-west running border -- further complicated by the presence of extensive urbanization and influences of this artificial border on the binational archaeological community's varying perspectives on prehistory. Even away from the urbanization, cross-border studies are no easy matter for reasons with which most of us are familiar. Cross-border cultural resource management concerns on top of the north-south and east-west gradation of the prehistoric and to some extent the historic record are some of the grounds for this very symposium. Such worries promote archaeological research and heritage management and multinational discourse in venues such as this and Julia Bendímez's INAH binational conferences and through other means. We are working together and clearly increasing archaeologists' and the public's awareness of the human past and its protection in this sector of the west, and Oswaldo Cuadra is to be commended for his insights.

Danilo Drakic (in this volume) continues his studies of the north peninsula Pacific coastal sites endangered or scheduled for destruction by the increasing developments in this littoral zone. We have seen a welcome emergence of INAH-funded CRM projects in this area and a wealth of new information forthcoming that we hope one day will be synthesized and made available to scholars and the public and form part of INAH's locally emerging public interpretation program. It is impressive to see how much work INAH staff is doing for relatively little compensation compared to projects stateside. What is also impressive is the methodology used, including large block exposures to reveal features, burials, and activity areas, some clearly related specifically to what is being interpreted as ritual or sacred space.

Since sampling in archaeology is always an issue, possibly more so in Baja California where scarce funds impose limitations, one can only wonder not only what we are gaining but what the tradeoff is for what we are losing, a message I am certain Director Julia Bendímez has relayed to the powers that be many times through her always delicate diplomacy, a situation over the years considerably ameliorated in the United States.

Both William Eckhardt and Antonio Porcayo's paper on Cerro Pinto near the international border (2008) and Harumi Fujita's paper on El Pulguero in the Cape area (in this volume) deal in part with similar archaeological issues, namely flakable stone extraction and workshops. Both studies build on pioneering efforts by such scholars as Malcolm Rogers (1939, 1966) and Mark Kowta (1969) to the north and south respectively. These papers presented here are important contributions to the examination of quarry-workshops in the peninsula, such extractive activities that clearly cover the entire duration of human occupation in Baja California. It is commendable to see the list grow for this type of work that in the past has included such investigations as were directed at the obsidian quarry at Valle del Azufre, the felsite quarries at Laguna Seca Chapala and Zaragoza, basalt quarries in the Bahía de la Concepción and Bahía de los Ángeles localities, and others. Quarry-workshop inquiries are important to understanding many aspects of flaked stone technology, and comparisons to those similar studies in southern California are certainly revealing.

What's more, it is informative to hear of the other archaeological associations—the sites' contexts and the use of byproducts in a wider perspective. However, we are really still only dealing with the proverbial tip of the iceberg in such explorations. The production and distribution of flakable stone in various forms holds much promise in peninsular research. A vexing problem of course in dealing with the more common stone types is that basalt, rhyolite, and cryptocrystalline silicate/quartz stone are broadly found in many places in outcrops and secondarily deposited clasts, sometimes widely distributed by natural processes over large expanses. Still, sourcing investigations of various utilized stone types is a promising field already briefly employed beyond obsidian in studies of rock art pigments and sources of milling stones, for instance.

A uniform terminology in the flaked stone reduction sequence output is apparent in many new works -- e.g., biface, preform, blanks; and quarry versus prospect versus expedient cobble use. Matthew Des Laurier's (2005) experimental reduction or replication exercises are practices more of us should emulate -- rigid experimentation beyond Emma Lou Davis' (1973) earlier, still valid observations regarding localized cobble smashing.

Carlos Figueroa's paper on flaked stone distribution patterns in the area of Colonet demonstrates the informational power and management need of broad-scale inventory since less than 1 percent or so of the peninsula has been subjected to intensive inventory, a chronicle of at least surficial evidence and a register that includes prehistoric and historic remains. Until rather recently most landscape or locality-level inventories using selective blocks or quadrants or sometimes in rather larger blocks have been in primarily research orientations with secondary management focus. And this is fine, but it is good to see an academic-related research focus deliberately placed in an area where cultural resource losses are at hand. Figueroa's study (and others like his) help in not only pinpointing sites or activity zones, if you will, but also form an important predictive base for adjoining locations, predictions important to both research and management. What is central in looking at the Figueroa research is the consideration of what is becoming more important in Alta California's archaeological work, the prediction of potential subsurface sites based on paleo-landforms and the like. Loren Davis (2006) and his students' peninsular efforts (cf. Henrickson 2002) provide some models in this regard.

Andrea Guía (2008) continues her very important research on the faunal assemblages from various northern Baja California sites and demonstrates the high importance placed on near-coastal fisheries for subsistence by prehistoric northwestern peninsula peoples. Her pioneering work in the north state builds upon other as yet sporadic faunal studies in the peninsula, such as those of Ken Gobalet, Anna Noah, Justin Hyland, Matt Des Lauriers, Peter Schultz, Harumi Fujita, and Judith Porcasi. We are acutely aware of the need to have available in Baja California at least one good comparative skeletal and scale collection, especially for marine fishes and other animals from both Pacific and Gulf contexts. And we are alert to those large, unstudied faunal assemblages in need of attention, such as from the ancient and not-so-ancient sites along the Pacific at Abrigo de los Escorpiones (Gruhn and Bryan 2002) and Laguna Guerrero Negro (Ritter 2002), among others.

A paper at the meetings by Judith Porcasi (2008) on the southern Alta California coastal/near coastal faunal resources whereby faunal biomass estimates are used to postulate changes in diet from a Pleistocene protein-based to a Holocene carbohydrate-based lifeway would be a model worth exploring across the artificial border into Baja California. The poster session by Joanne Gilby and others (2008) on mollusk use on Isla Cedros reminds us of this important aspect of faunal analysis.

As an aside, we are also cognizant of the need for more macro- and microfloral studies and the availability of a comparative plant-based collection in the peninsula. While such a seed data bank has been started for historic cultivars, this broader resource needs to be at hand and to be employed. The presentation by Mikael Fauvelle and Lisa Smith (2008) on *Zostera* use demonstrates the importance of this segment of the archaeological record.

Fernando Oviedo García and Andrea Guía Ramírez discuss an unusual Kumeyaay cremation from Ojos Negros in the northern reaches of the peninsula. This find brings to mind the Hohokam/Colorado River influences that permeated into southern Alta and northern Baja California, and I am reminded of a similar discovery from northern Arizona published in 1970 by D. L. True and Fred Reinman including the delicate triangular points attributed to the Hohokam and western late prehistoric peoples and perhaps related to the peninsular Comondú series.

Certainly there are relationships long recognized of influences into the peninsula from the Arizona/Colorado River area and beyond -- Charles DiPeso's (1979) Gran Chichimeca. Abalone was traded across the peninsula into the Sonoran area (DuShane 1971:10); cotton cloth made its way to Bahía de los Ángeles (Massey and Osborne 1961). Other considerations include ceramic distribution, and shell beads into the Guerrero Negro area. Chester King's paper (2008) is worthy of note since he discussed shell beads made from Gulf of California mollusks making their way into San Diego County -- and a paper by Monroe et al. (2008) was heard on the mitochondrial DNA analysis of Baja California skeletal remains and the Yuman expansion model. In consideration of the above, Laylander's issue of peninsular cultural isolation or connection is becoming clearer.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In returning to Laylander's peninsular topics, we have seen Mathes' paper primarily and a number of the other papers secondarily relying on the rich ethnohistoric and ethnographic record for the peninsula. Papers such as those by Eckhardt and Porcayo and by Fujita deal with the antiquity of human use in the peninsula, and with the news from Paisley Cave in Oregon regarding possible pre-Clovis remains reverberating around us (cf. Balter 2008), we need to continue focusing on what is becoming increasingly clear -- that there is an early human presence in the peninsula, whether surficial, submarine, or buried in sediment.

A number of papers have touched upon issues of mobility and sedentariness and group interaction, of environmental influences versus or in combination with cultural determinants. Settlement/subsistence inquires based on local and broad-scale inventory continue to be undertaken as evident in these papers. I would call for some scholars to start or continue their focus on so-called patch use, optimal foraging exams of areas with evaluations of resource richness, labor extraction costs, and nutritional examinations, much like we have seen in the past to some extent from Des Lauriers (2005) and Moore (2001:41-42). Have there truly been cases of overexploitation of resources in areas of the peninsula?

Laylander's issue of culture continuity versus change should remind us, as evident in the papers presented, of the need to continue to refine our culture chronologies, to perfect our typologies, and to experiment. While that well-stratified and well-dated site may be out there, we need to continue as shown in these papers to build upon our cultural constructions by cross-dating, seriation, obtaining good samples, and being good scholars.

Another issue that is to some extent evident in the approach of the scholars here is the examination of inferred changing coastal versus interior and north-to-south cultural interactions for thousands of years, including looking at research data and management practices beyond the international border. It is essential to emphasize that the informative papers presented in the symposium demonstrate the blending of research interests with heritage management concerns. Julia Bendímez and her team and all researchers working under the INAH umbrella are to be commended for their considerable efforts and international outreach and cooperation. Because of this I don't think we have a forgotten peninsula anymore.

REFERENCES CITED

Allen, Mark

- 2008 Hunter-Gatherer Warfare: The Last Bastion of the Pacified Past? Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for California Archaeology, Burbank.

Balter, Michael

- 2008 DNA from Fossil Feces Breaks Clovis Barrier. *Science* 320:37.

Davis, Emma Lou

- 1973 Baja California: Cobble Smashing on Stone Anvils. *Pacific Coast Archaeological Society Quarterly* 4(1):52-54.

Davis, Loren

- 2006 Baja California's Paleoenvironmental Context. In *The Prehistory of Baja California: Advances in the Archaeology of the Forgotten Peninsula*, edited by Don Laylander and Jerry D. Moore, pp. 14-23. University Press of Florida, Gainesville.

Des Lauriers, Matthew

- 2005 Rediscovering Huamalgua, the Island of the Fogs: Archaeology and Ethnohistory of the Isla Cedros, Baja California. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Riverside.

DiPeso, Charles C.

- 1979 Prehistory: Southern Periphery. In *Southwest*, edited by Alfonso Ortiz, pp. 152-161. Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 9, William C. Sturtevant, general editor. Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.

DuShane, Helen

- 1971 *The Baja California Travels of Charles Russell Orcutt*. Dawson's Book Shop, Los Angeles.

Eckhardt, William, and Antonio Porcayo Micheli

- 2008 Archaeological Studies of Cerro Pinto, Baja California. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for California Archaeology Meeting, Burbank.

Fauvelle, Mikael, and Lisa Smith

- 2008 Paleobotanical Archaeology of Isla Cedros. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for California Archaeology, Burbank.

Figueroa Beltrán, Carlos

- 2008 Surficial Lithic Deposits as Evidence of Land-Use Patterns in the Region of Colonet, Baja California, Mexico. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for California Archaeology, Burbank.

García, Fernando Oviedo, and Andrea Guía Ramírez

- 2008 Discovery of a New Funerary Practice in pre-Columbian Baja California. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for California Archaeology, Burbank.

Gilby, Joanne

- 2008 "Let's Do Lunch"—Menu Selections as Determined from Shell Analysis at a Large Village Site on Isla Cedros, Baja California. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the Society for California Archaeology, Burbank.

Gruhn, Ruth, and Alan Bryan

- 2002 An Interim Report on Two Rockshelter Sites with Early Holocene Occupation in the Northern Baja California Peninsula. In *Symposium Papers, 2nd Binational Symposium: Balances and Perspectives on the Anthropology and History of Baja California*, edited by Michael Wilken-Robertson, Moisés Santos Mena, Martha Edna Castillo Sarabia, and Don Laylander (compact disc). Ensenada, Mexico.

Guía Ramírez, Andrea

- 2008 Indigenous Fishing Practices in Ancient California. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for California Archaeology, Burbank.

Henrickson, Celeste

- 2002 Geoarchaeological Investigations at the La Bocana Site in Northern Baja California, Mexico. Unpublished Master's thesis, Department of Anthropology, Washington State University, Pullman.

Hildebrandt, William R., and Michael J. Darcangelo

- 2008 *Life on the River, The Archaeology of an Ancient Native American Culture*. Heyday Books, Berkeley, California.

King, Chester

- 2008 Shell Beads in San Diego County. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for California Archaeology, Burbank.

Kowta, Makoto

- 1969 *An Archaeological Survey in the Region of La Paz Bay, Baja California, and Problems of Guaicurian Prehistory*. Report submitted to the National Science Foundation, Washington, D.C.

Laylander, Don

- 2006 Issues in Baja California Prehistory. In *The Prehistory of Baja California: Advances in the Archaeology of the Forgotten Peninsula*, edited by Don Laylander and Jerry D. Moore, pp. 1-13. University Press of Florida, Gainesville.

Massey, William C., and Carolyn M. Osborne

- 1961 A Burial Cave in Baja California: The Palmer Collection, 1887. *Anthropological Records* 16:339-364. University of California, Berkeley.

Mathes, W. Michael

- 2008 Indigenous Warfare in Baja California, 1535-1840: Cultural Comparisons. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for California Archaeology, Burbank.

Moore, Jerry D.

- 2001 Extensive Prehistoric Settlement Systems in Northern Baja California: Archaeological Data and Theoretical Implications from the San Quintín-El Rosario Region. *Pacific Coast Archaeological Society Quarterly* 37(4):30-52.

Monroe, Cara, Brian M. Kemp, and David Glenn Smith

- 2008 Southern California, Baja California, and Southwest Prehistory: Genetic Evidence. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for California Archaeology, Burbank.

Porcasi, Judith F.

- 2008 10,000 Years and 500 miles of Zooarchaeology in 2 Minutes. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for California Archaeology, Burbank.

Ritter, Eric W.

- 2002 *Informe: Investigaciones Arqueológicas en Laguna Guerrero Negro y Laguna Manuela, Baja California (Fase II)*. Report on file with the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Mexico City.

Rogers, Malcolm J.

- 1939 *Early Lithic Industries of the Lower Basin of the Colorado River and Adjacent Desert Areas*. San Diego Museum Papers No. 3. San Diego.
1966 *Ancient Hunters of the Far West*. Union-Tribune, San Diego.

True, D. L., and Fred M. Reinman

- 1970 An Intrusive Cremation from a Northern Arizona Site. In *Papers on California and Great Basin Prehistory*, edited by Eric W. Ritter, Peter D. Schulz, and Robert Kautz, pp. 209-229. Center for Archaeological Research at Davis Publication No. 2. University of California, Davis.